

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 IO-13 OPR-02 SY-05 CIAE-00
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C O N F I D E N T I A L LUBUMBASHI 0538

E.O. 11652 GDS
TAGS: MOPS, PINS, CG
SUBJECT: BELGIAN HOSPITAL DIRECTOR DISCUSSES EVENTS IN KOLWEZI

1. BEGLIAN SURGEON WHO IS DIRECTOR OF GECAMINES MEDICAL
FACILITIES AT KOLWEZI AND HAS LIVED IN ZAIRE MORE THAN
TWENTY YEARS HAS PROVIDED THE FOLLOWING OBSERVATIONS
ABOUT THE ATTACK ON KOLWEZI AND THE SITUATION AT THE HOSPITAL.

2. HOW THE FIGHTING BEGAN. AT 0600 ON MAY 13 HE HEARD
WHAT SOUNDED LIKE AN AIRPLANE PASS OVERHEAD. ALMOST
IMMEDIATELY SHOOTING STARTED SOME OF IT COMING FROM THE
DIRECTION OF THE BRIDGE IN THE CENTER OF TOWN, INDICATING
THAT SOME ELEMENTS WERE IN TOWN BEFORE THE FIGHTING STARTED.
THERE WAS MUCH SHOOTING BUT FEW SIGNS OF BATTLE. HE
BELIEVED THAT MOST FAZ TROOPS DEPARTED BEFORE WITHOUT FIGHTING.
HE ALSO HEARD THAT SOME OF THE SIX FRENCH MILITARY ADVISORS
WENT OUT TO INVESTIGATE AND POSSIBLE FIGHT BUT WERE KILLED
ALMOST IMMEDIATELY.

2. WHO WERE THE INVADERS: THE DOCTOR HAD MANY ENCOUNTERS
WITH THE INVADERS WHO BROUGHT ALL THEIR WOUNDED TO THE
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GCM HOSPITAL. THE DOCTOR SAID THAT HE ONLY HEARD FRENCH
OR SWAHILI SPOKE. HE SAW NO WHITES OR ANY TROOPS
SUSPECTS OF BEING CUBANS. HE ESTIMATED THAT 90 PC WERE
TSHOKWE OR LUNDA MANY OF WHOM BECAUSE OF THEIR YOUTH
HAD PROBABLY PICKED UP DURING LAST YEARS WAR
AND IMPRESSED INTO SERVICE. HE PERSONALLY KNEW FOUR

SOLDIERS ALL LUNDAS.. DESPITE THEIR BACKGROUNDS THE INVADERS EMPHASIZED THEY WERE NOT KATANGANS GENDARMES OR SUPPORTERS OF MOISE TSHOMBE, BUT A LIBERATION ARMY FIGHTING FOR A FREE CONGO AND A BETTER GOVERNMENT FOR THE CONGOLESE PEOPLE. THEY REFERRED TO EACH OTHER AS COMRADE, BUT CONTINUED TO USE THEIR CHRISTIAN NAMES.

4. THEIR DRESS. THE INVADERS WERE WELL-DRESSED IN KHAKI UNIFORMS WITH GOLD ON BLUE TIGER EMBLEMS ON ONE SHOULDER AND OVERSEAS CAPS OR BERETS. AROUND THEIR NECKS MANY WORE CHAINS, WHICH SUSPENDED TWO EMPTY CARTRIDGES SHELLS, AMULETS DESIGNED TO WARD OFF INJURIES. MANY CARRIED PACK WHICH WERE ALMOST ENTIRELY FILLED WITH AMMUNITION. HE BELIEVED ALL HAD ARRIVED IN KOLWEZI ON FOOT.

5. THEIR BEHAVIOR. DURING THE ENTIRE TIME THE INVADERS WERE WELL-DISCIPLINED WHILE AT GCMS MEDICAL FACILITIES. THEY KILLED SOME FAZ PATIENTS WHO WERE RECUPERATING AT THE HOSPITAL BUT DID NOT HARASS A GROUP OF FOUR FAZ PATIENTS AT THE GCM CLINIC ACROSS THE STREET (THERE FOUR HE BELIEVED WERE WOUNDED AT THE TIME GENERAL IKUKU DIED IN HIS HELICOPTER ACCIDENT) AT THE BEGINNING THE INVADERS SEEMED WELL DISCIPLINED THROUGHOUT THE TOWN. SOME LOCAL PEOPLE PARTICULARLY FROM ZONE MANIKA SOUTH OF TOWN JOINED THE INVADERS, EVEN DONNING UNIFORMS. THE DOCTOR BELIEVED THAT THE INVADERS LEADER CONFIDENTIAL

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MAY HAVE BEEN A RECENT RESIDENT OF ZONE MANIKA BECAUSE THE GROUP SEEMED TO HAVE A HEADQUARTERS IN THAT SECTION OF TOWN. POPULAR SUPPORT DID NOT LAST LONG, ESPECIALLY WHEN IT BECAME APPARENT THERE MIGHT BE FOREIGN INTERVENTION. THE DOCTOR ALSO BELIEVED THE INVADERS CAPTURED SEVEN APC'S FROM FAZ DURING THE EARLY DAYS.

6. INVADERS CASUALTIES. THE DOCTOR SAID THAT GCM FACILITIES HAD TREATED ABOUT 400 WOUNDED INVADERS HE BELIEVED THERE WERE ALSO MANY DEAD. ON THE EVENING OF MAY 17 THE INVADERS TOOK ALL OF THEIR WOUNDED OUT OF THE HOSPITAL AND MOVED THEM OUT OF TOWN, INCLUDING MANY WHO WERE SERIOUSLY WOUNDED OR AWAITING EMERGENCY OPERATIONS. HE ADDED THAT THE INVADERS WERE ALSO CAREFUL ABOUT REMOVING ALL OF THEIR DEAD.

7. THE HOSPITALS FUTURE. THE DOCTOR WAS OBVIOUSLY VERY GRIEVED BY THE EVENTS IN KOLWEZI. HE NOTED THAT GCM CLINIC AT KOLWEZI HAD BEEN AMONG THE BEST SMALL HOSPITALS IN AFRICA (GCM OFFICIALS CONFIRMED THAT IT WAS THE BEST OF THEIR FACILITIES) THE 17

SISTERS WHOSE ORDER HAD BEEN RUNNING THE CLINIC FOR
18 YEARS HAD DEPARTED ON ONE OF THE EVACUATION FLIGHTS
FOR BELGIUM. HE DID NOT BELIEVE THEY WOULD EVER
RETURN OR WHAT SUCH A HIGHLY COMPETENT STAFF COULD
BE EASILY ASSEMBLED EVEN IF GCM WERE TO REOPEN
ITS KOLWEZI OPERATION WITH GUARANTEED SECURITY.
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